Tashkent

or citadel which was blown up by the Russians immediately after the capture of the town. It was located on the upper left bank of the Bos-su canal, and the site today is within the Russian town and barracks and various public and private buildings are built on it. 712. 361

2. The Bazaar

The bazaar has a meaning for the Central Asians which it is difficult for the European to grasp properly. The Central Asian spends the greater part of his life in the bazaar, and for him it takes the place of our newspapers, restaurants, coffeehouses, townhalls, amusement places, stock exchanges, law courts, etc. At the bazaar the entire public life and a great part of the private life of the male urban population takes place, and day in, day out, in winter and summer almost the entire population, when it is not occupied with work in the fields, is gathered in the bazaar. The bazaar is the real home of the townsman; since his private dwelling serves him primarily as a lodging for the night, and as a depository for his property and his wives and children, he therefore expends relatively /161/ little trouble on it. 366

/Figure 55. Caption: Bazaar scene in Tashkent: A mullah preaches in the open marketplace. / p.139a

The arrangement of the bazaars is the same everywhere, and the bazaars of the different towns differ from each other only /162/ in size. The bazaar in Tashkent is one of the largest in all Central Asia, containing about four thousand shops and workshops. The streets of the bazaar are relatively wide and mostly covered with reed mats, which are spread along beams diagonally placed over the streets from one row of stalls to another. The result is a pleasant twilight and a refreshing coolness, which is increased by a constant sprinkling of the bazaar streets with water. It is a beneficent contrast to the dazzling sunlight and the stifling ovenlike heat of the nearby streets leading into the dwelling quarters. (Figure 56). 361 366 p.140a

The booths which range along both sides of the bazaar streets, serving either for selling goods or as workshops for the various craftsmen, all look alike and have nothing in common with European shops. They are rooms two and a half to three meters high, four and a half to six meters long, and from two to two and a half meters deep, which are completely open to the street. The walls are made of clay or else of reed screens spread over on both sides with clay. The roof also is 347

347 made only of beams, reeds and clay. The floor of the booth is usually raised a few feet above the street level, as is the small footpath which runs along the booths. The booths serve, without difficulty as places to sell all kinds of ware, or as workshops for all kinds of handicrafts, in effect whole industries are carried on at the bazaar. There are no windows or doors in the bazaar stalls, so that the merchants and craftsmen carry on their business all year round in all weather in these places, enclosed by only three walls. At night the shops are closed either by a boarded partition or by folding screens made of reeds. Those merchants who are unable to take all their wares home with them every evening spend the night in their shops, both winter and summer.

Merchants and craftsmen sit on the floor during their work on reed mats or blankets, with their legs crossed, sitting either inside the booth or on the footpath which leads into the booths (Figure 57, p. 15a, p. 165). The buyers also take their places on the ground beside the merchants, unless they prefer, for the sake of greater convenience to undertake the selection of wares on horseback, in which case the wares are brought out one by one to be inspected from the horse. Naturally, since in winter it is not particularly comfortable to sit on the ground which is soaked through, there are a few wooden benches covered with blankets or carpets for the greater comfort of the public in front of the better shops, especially tea houses, and eating places, /163/ (Figure 58, p. 15a, p. 165), and on these one can take his place with his legs crossed and conclude his business comfortably. /Figure 56, p. 14a. Caption: Covered bazaar streets/

366 443 A peculiarity of Central Asian bazzars is the strict separation of various industries and various types of goods /164/ from each other, which makes the search for and the choice of the necessary wares far easier for the buying public. One row of booths is, for example, exclusively devoted to clothing merchants, the next occupied by merchants in cotton material, the third by silk merchants; furs, linen, boots, saddles, metal wares, crockery, vegetables, fruit, meat, in short, everything there is to buy can be bought only in one specific row of booths. In the same manner all the eating places are in one row, where they prepare their national dishes right out on the street before all eyes: 'Plov' /pilaf/, 'pelmene' /small meat dumplings/, 'shashlik' and 'lepeshki' /small meal cakes/; and they poison the air far around with their burned 'shaffet' and 'kunshut' /sesame/ oil.

The handicrafts, like the wares are all organized strictly according to categories. In one street the kettle and teapot smiths make an